



# The February Session taxes headed your way...and more!

## 5% Cell-Phone Tax

**-- Making technology unaffordable for the rest of us**

Cities have long milked phone companies in Franchise Fees putting telephone poles and cables in the public right of way. Now local governments are increasingly trying to tax cell phone companies who do not use the public right of way. Raising millions in new cell phone taxes with a new 5% Franchise Fee will mean higher costs for cell phone users. This idea is being proposed for the February Legislative Session.

## Small Business Tax Increase

**-- Politicians find it easy to steal money from the little guy.**

The Oregonian headline shouted "Beware of Small Business Tax Hike" over State Representative David Gomberg's bill that hits Oregon small businesses with a huge tax increase. His bill would cancel the 2013 small business tax cuts package (he voted for) before a single person gets tax relief. His plan gives tax relief to only the smallest of Oregon's businesses so it doesn't significantly help anyone but allows politicians to take credit for cutting taxes.

## Gas Tax

**-- They want to double gas tax?**

On the Federal level, Oregon Congressman Earl Blumenauer has proposed to nearly DOUBLE the federal gas tax from 18.4 cents to 33.4 cents per gallon. This would bring the total state & federal gas tax to around 63 cents per gallon.

The 2005 highway bill diverted \$20 billion in gas-tax funds to 6,373 pork-barrel earmarks like bike trails,

pedestrian trails, park signs and the famous "Bridge to Nowhere". If Congress can't spend our current gas tax dollars correctly -- why reward them with a raise? *(National Review August 28, 2007, American Petroleum Institute, 2013)*

## Carbon Tax

**-- Expect higher utility bills, gas taxes**

This is a tax already in motion. \$200,000 of your tax dollars are being spent to study how Oregon could enact an Oregon Carbon Tax. The 2015 Legislature is expected to act on the study. A CBO study on Carbon Taxes predicts a 18% increase in utility bills and would amount to 1.8 percent of before-tax income for lower income households. British Columbia has a carbon tax and it costs taxpayers 25 cents per gallon more on their gas taxes. If Oregon follows that Carbon Tax model and Congressman Blumenauer's gas tax increase passes, we could pay 88 cents per gallon in taxes.

California's plan to control carbon includes a cap-and-trade system that has become a giant green pork machine raking in a half billion dollars in 2013. The funds were supposed to be dedicated to energy savings programs like solar subsidies but were instead diverted to welfare & Medicaid benefits. *(Washington Post 5-13-13. AP 12-16-13. WSJ 6-18-13)*

## Birdseed tax

**-- Who knew birds were the source of Oregon's budget problems?**

State Representative Cliff Bentz is proposing a birdseed tax and cattle salt-feed tax. The money raised would be partially spent on habitat restoration to prevent an endangered species listing.

Because the tax does not raise that much Bentz stated, "The goal for me wasn't the money, it was the message." Using tax increases to send "political" messages is a painful and costly way of governing. It is tragic that the problem could not be resolved with the current 22% increase in state funding for Natural Resource agencies. *(Oregonian 1-15-14. Legislative Fiscal Office Budget Highlights 2013)*

## Forcing backyard gardeners to get a state license

State Representative Jeff Reardon has proposed a bill for the February Session that would require home gardeners to get a special garden license. They would also be required to pass a state government online test even if the home gardener were to use lawful pesticides bought in your local store.

With state licensing it may also lead to license fees and a State Licensing Board of Directors.



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